



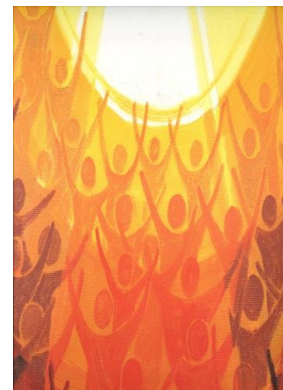
Feast Of All Saints 2014

Are you struck, in the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, by the line, “Those whose faith is known to you alone?” Today, the Feast of All Saints, we give thanks to God for all his saints, for those we read about in the Scriptures and for the saints of history, both old and new, famous or forgotten, who are officially recognised by the universal Church, the “hundred and forty four thousand” perhaps, of the Apocalypse. But there is also that “huge number, impossible to count, of people from every nation, race, tribe and language”, who, stand before God’s throne and worship him night and day in the joyful and victorious liturgy of heaven. Among them we find

“those who have been through the great tribulation and have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Today we celebrate not only the known but the unknown, those, in fact “whose faith is known to you alone.” We can derive great comfort from that, because there is room among the saints even for the insignificant and the unimportant, and for those who, though they might have failed often, nevertheless have persevered in humility and surrender daily to God’s will. This is the ultimate proclamation of Christian hope. “In my Father’s house there are many mansions.” As St John wrote, “Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God’s children, and that is what we are. We are already the children of God. All we know is, that when the future is revealed, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is.”

We are not easily convinced of God’s love. Creation, which reveals a God of love and beauty, a God of light and life, also conceals the sinister presence of evil, destruction and death. Moreover, our faith is weak and we are often unworthy, sinful and impure. Yet it is we whom God loves. “God so loved the world ... He did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through him.” Jesus came to save sinners, to save you and me. Not a sparrow falls to the ground but that God takes note of it. “Why, the very hairs of your head are counted!” It is easy to forget that the saints, too, were sinners, sometimes grave sinners, and that they, like us, were forgiven by the Cross of Jesus and saved by God’s grace, washed clean in the Blood of the Lamb. “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” those who recognise their need for God, for theirs alone is the Kingdom of Heaven.



For the present age, God’s children are divided into the Church Militant, those of us still struggling here on Earth, the Church Expectant, the souls in Purgatory being prepared for Heaven, and the Church Triumphant, those who have crossed the threshold and now see God face to face in the sheer bliss of the beatific vision. But let us not forget: one day there will be only Heaven, the Church Triumphant will stand alone, and there will be only Love, for God will be all in all.

Today, then, we give thanks to God for all his saints and thank him for calling us to be numbered among them. Let us also promise to do our best to respond to his love and, in all humility, to be content and truly grateful to be one of those “whose faith is known to God alone.” Amen.